

## 135 MWp Agri-PV project by SENS and Peridot Solar in Sicily combines technology and nature

### SENS's largest solar project to date is a showcase for sustainable business practices

Würzburg/Eszen. The bees are buzzing, the fig trees and olive trees are blossoming, and soon the sun will be shining here on the solar modules of SENS's 135 MWp solar project, which will blend seamlessly into the Sicilian surroundings. Würzburg-based solar service provider Iqony Solar Energy Solutions – SENS for short – a subsidiary of Essen-based Iqony GmbH, announces the signing of a contract with Peridot Solar, a subsidiary of FitzWalter Capital and investor in the solar project.

This marks the start of construction of the largest solar project approved to date, covering an area of 230 hectares; the plant will go into operation before the end of this year. The project, with a capacity of 135 megawatts (MWp), is the first of a total of seven planned agri-photovoltaic ground-mounted plants in Sicily, which will have a combined capacity of around 700 MWp.

### Agri-PV in Sicily – a symbiosis of energy and nature

The project was implemented as an agri-PV project in order to conserve nature and the ecosystem. The area is used for energy production and for agricultural purposes. Solar modules will be installed on the 230-hectare site and are expected to be put into operation by the turn of the year. In the future, the plant will generate more than 220 gigawatt hours (GWh) of renewable energy each year. By comparison, that energy is sufficient to supply the Sicilian capital Palermo for about a quarter of a year.

In addition, olive and fig trees are to be planted between the solar panels, and beehives set up, bringing many agricultural and economic benefits to the region. SENS Italia, the national subsidiary of SENS, is therefore not only acting as project developer, EPC partner and O&M service provider in this

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project, but is also playing a major role for the flora and fauna on the site. With the combination of renewable energy and the cultivation of agricultural products, almost 110.000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> can be saved in Sicily each year.

“We designed the entire project, and now we are building it and will also operate it in the future. That demonstrates our comprehensive expertise in PV services along the entire value chain,” explains Sarah Herresthal, Managing Director of SENS Italia. On completion of the construction phase and commissioning of the solar park, SENS Italia will take over the O&M services. “But that’s not all: we are expanding our services in this project by also taking care of the agricultural maintenance, management and harvesting of the plants. So SENS is now also becoming a farmer in Italy,” Sarah Herresthal adds.

### Advantages for the region as a whole

SENS began planning and development for the large-scale Italian project in 2019 in collaboration with its long-term partner Sicilia e Progresso (S&P). The protection of flora and fauna in the region and the integration of the solar modules into the local landscape were the center of attention right from the start. On an island like Sicily, there is always the problem of land scarcity. The method of double land use by means of agri-PV addresses this problem in a sensible and intelligent way. Furthermore, on the ground, evaporation is reduced by the artificial shading provided by the installed solar modules, thus reducing water consumption for cultivation of the crops.

### Total project pipeline of around 700 MWp planned in Sicily

The 135 MWp solar farm, consisting of six sub-projects, is the first of a total of seven planned agri-photovoltaic ground-mounted systems in Sicily. The total output of all the plants planned there will comprise around 700 MWp of PV power and, in addition to generating renewable energy, will also produce 600,000 bottles of olive oil, 2.2 million kilograms of figs and 120,000 kilograms of honey per year.

In addition, the overall project includes the construction of a transformer substation in Sicily, which SENS will build and connect to the local high-voltage grid. This is the first time the transmission system operator has commissioned a private company to build a substation. Normally, the construction of such facilities is the responsibility of the grid operator itself.

“Completion of the substation will significantly strengthen the electricity infrastructure in the region. It highlights the transformation in the energy sector and opens up the opportunity for private companies to play a more active role in the development of sustainable energy sources,” emphasizes André Kremer, CEO of the SENS Group. “Sicily has an enormous but so far largely untapped potential

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for the development of renewable energy. Our aim is to exploit this potential in the best possible way, always taking into account the concerns of nature and the landscape,” André Kremer adds, underlining once again the importance of the project.

The next sub-project in SENS’s Sicilian project pipeline will not only be built by the Würzburg-based solar specialist, but also operated by the company as an investor in the long term. This is in line with the future strategic orientation of SENS, as André Kremer explains: “In the future, Iqony SENS will significantly expand its own PV portfolio and consequently, as an energy producer, take a much more active role in shaping the energy transition.”

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## About SENS

SENS, the Iqony Solar Energy Solutions Group, is a service provider based in Würzburg, Germany, with operations in the renewable energy sector in numerous European countries. From project development and turnkey construction of utility-scale solar farms, via operation and maintenance to the creation and implementation of holistic energy solutions for commerce and industry, SENS is the right contact for your needs. SENS is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Essen-based energy company Iqony GmbH, and employs around 350 people at nine locations in Europe.

## About Iqony

Iqony makes green energy feasible. With more than 85 years of experience in the planning, construction and operation of energy facilities, the company provides holistic solutions for the decarbonization, decentralization and digitalization of the energy supply. Iqony focuses on renewable energies and bridging technologies that can be used in a climate-neutral way now and in the future. In addition to solar, wind and geothermal energy, the portfolio includes hydrogen solutions, storage technologies, engineering services and gas-fired power plants. Around 2,300 employees worldwide implement projects for major industrial companies, utilities, cities and municipalities in numerous countries across the globe. Specializing in tailor-made solutions for complex challenges, Iqony draws on its broad and in-depth knowledge of the energy industry across the full range of technologies and services.

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